DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 167 138 IR 006 896

| | |
|---|---|
| TITLE | Our Nation's Libraries: An Inventory of Resources and Needs. |
| INSTITUTION | National Commission on Libraries and Information Science, Washington, D. C. |
| PUB DATE | 78 |
| NOTE | 18p.; Photos and colored pages will not reproduce clearly |
| AVAILABLE FROM | Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402 (Stock No. 052-003-00595-6; $1.20) |
| EDRS PRICE | MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage. |
| DESCRIPTORS | Academic Libraries; Charts; Construction Needs; Financial Needs; Instructional Materials Centers; Library Collections; Library Expenditures; *Library Facilities; *National Surveys; *Needs Assessment; Personnel Needs; Public Libraries; School Libraries |

ABSTRACT

This inventory of the resources and needs of the nation's public libraries, academic libraries, and public school library media centers presents an impoverished picture: these libraries are grossly underfunded. As a result they lack the staff, materials, space, and hours of service to meet citizens' needs. To bring the libraries up to minimum levels of service will require a one-time expenditure of $12 billion for books and other materials and an increase of $6 billion a year for operating budgets (based on 1974 costs). These conclusions are supported by charts showing the deficiencies in professional staff; books, print, and microform materials; nonprint materials; and annual operating budgets. Problems associated with the number of libraries, staff, materials, space, hours of service, and expenditures are briefly discussed for each type of library. (JD)

**********
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
**********

ED167138

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

# OUR NATION'S LIBRARIES:

Our nation's libraries are grossly underfunded. As a result they lack the staff, materials, space, and hours of service to meet our citizens' needs.

To bring our libraries up to minimum levels of service will require:

- A one-time expenditure of $12 billion for books and other materials.
- An increase of $6 billion a year for operating budgets. (Figures based on 1974 costs.)

Some of our country's libraries offer their users superior resources. But viewed as a whole our libraries are impoverished.

## Inventory Advisory Committee

*(Agencies for members at the time of the inventory)*

Meredith Bloss
*New Haven Free Public Library*

David Carrington
*Library of Congress*

Daniel W. Casey
*National Commission on Libraries and Information Science (NCLIS)*

Howard Hitchens
*Association for Education Communications and Technology*

*Clint Wallington

Elizabeth Hughey
*U.S. Office of Education*

*Dorothy Kittel

*Larry Papier

David Kaser
*Graduate Library School*
*Indiana University*

John McDonald
*University of Connecticut Libraries*

*Sue Frankie
*Association of Research Libraries*

Frank L. Schick
*National Center for Education Statistics*

Joseph F. Shubert
*State Library of Ohio*

Johanna S. Wood
*Public Schools of the District of Columbia*

*Hilda Clemmer
*American Association of School Librarians*

Alphonse F. Trezza
*Executive Director, NCLIS*

Douglas S. Price
*Deputy Director, NCLIS*

*associate committee member

Contents

Advisers 2
The Inventory—Facts for Citizens 3
Major Library Resources and Needs (a chart of numbers) 8
Public Libraries 10
Public School Library Media Centers 12
Academic Libraries 14
The Inventory—Compiler and Source for Copies 16



# The Inventory– Facts for Citizens

It is important that responsible citizens know how adequate our nation's resources are. We value libraries as sources of information, centers for education, and suppliers of creative leisure activities. But we see alarming signs that as a nation we are not getting the library services we need and want.

The vast increase in the quantity and variety of information multiplies each person's needs and demands. Innovations of technology offer new opportunities to supply more information to each person. Today when good library service depends on the sharing of resources no library can stand alone.

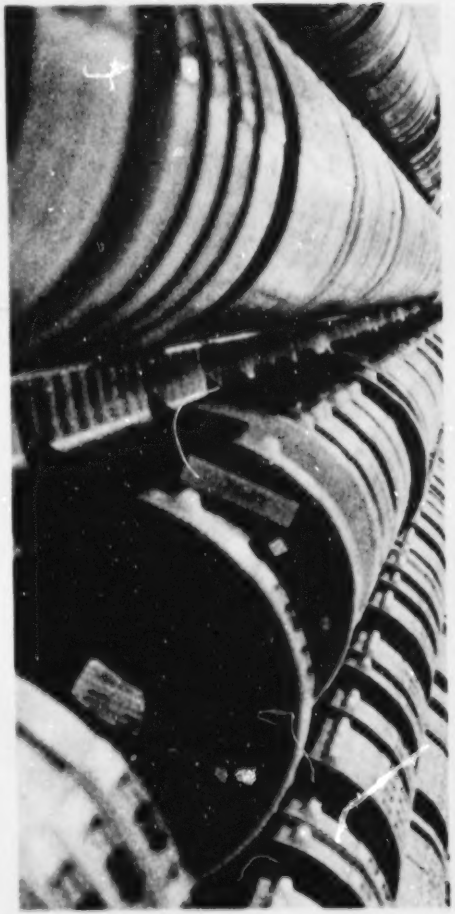
This inventory of our nation's library resources and needs gives us facts about groups of libraries. These facts can help us make an intelligent assessment of our libraries and devise ways to supply them with necessary resources. We can use the inventory to study groups of libraries, such as libraries within a state or region. Because the inventory is

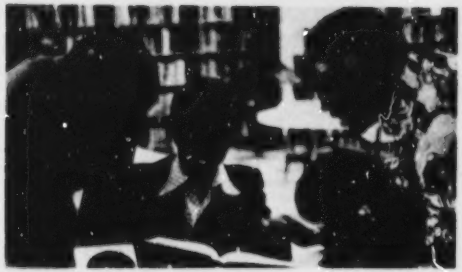
national, however, it cannot serve as a guide for the evaluation of a single library.

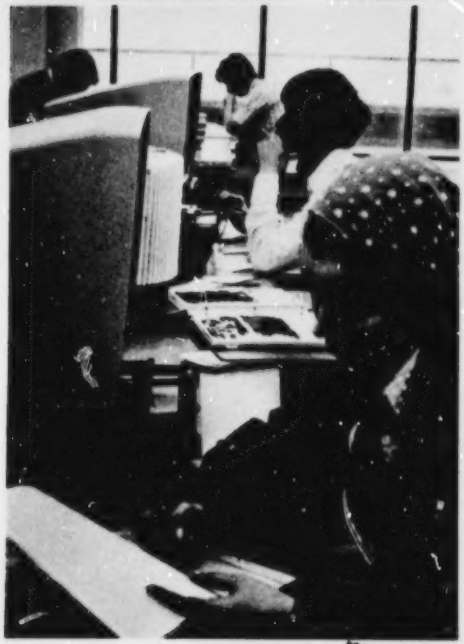
The inventory encompasses public libraries, library media centers in public schools, and academic libraries. Most of the statistics are for 1974. Omitted (because facts are not uniformly available) are state libraries, federal libraries, and special libraries in corporations, research centers, museums, and not-for-profit agencies.

The inventory focuses on *numbers*. It supplies quantitative facts about resources—library staff, materials (and how libraries get them), space, operating budgets, and hours of service. The indicators of minimum needs identify what is necessary for an individual library to serve its users and to exchange service with other libraries on an equal basis. (The indicators are based on the standards which library associations and groups of libraries developed.)

Numbers, however, tell only part of the library story. Adequate resources are necessary but they do not assure quality. In addition to inventories like this we need national studies on the quality of our library service as measured by performance.







## Today's Libraries Operate in a Time of Paradoxical Change

- The volume of knowledge is growing at an increasing rate.
- The creative use of new technology and the linking of libraries through networks is making all knowledge more accessible.
- Severe inflation reduces the value of a fixed library budget. At the same time our political climate is one of slow-growth, no-growth, and (in some communities) major cutbacks in funding for public services.

# Libraries for (Almost) All

*We have*

8,307 public libraries to serve 199 million persons.

*But*

5-10 million other persons have no local public library service.

*We have*

74,725 public school library media centers that offer service to 44 million students.

*But*

1 million students are in schools without library media centers.

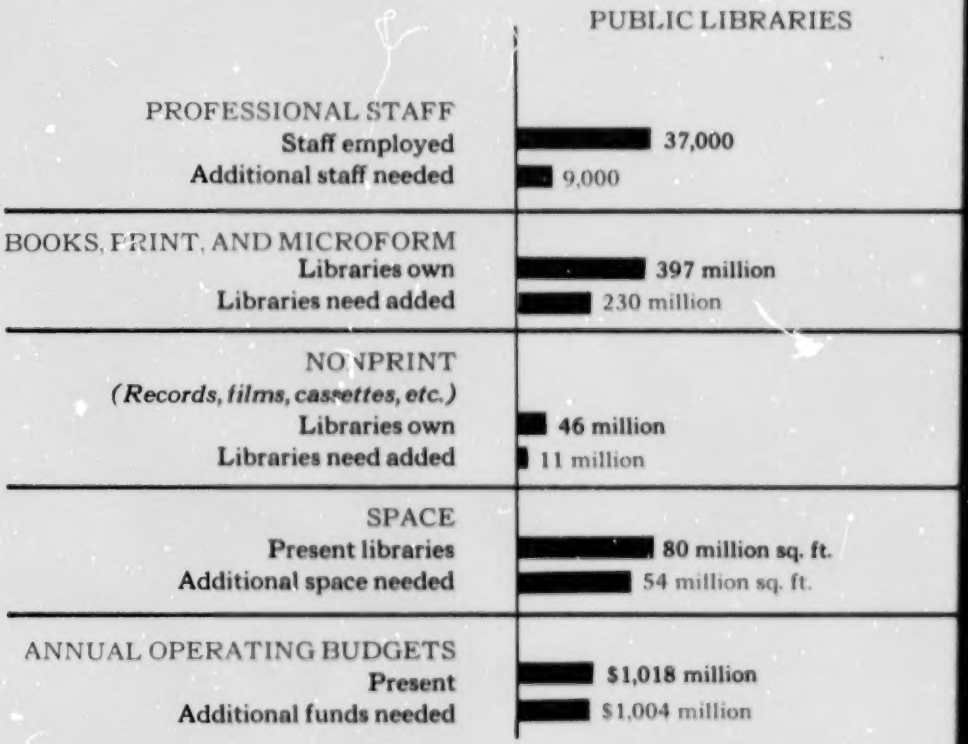
*We have*

3,000 academic libraries that offer service to over 10 million undergraduate and graduate students and faculty and to large numbers of researchers.

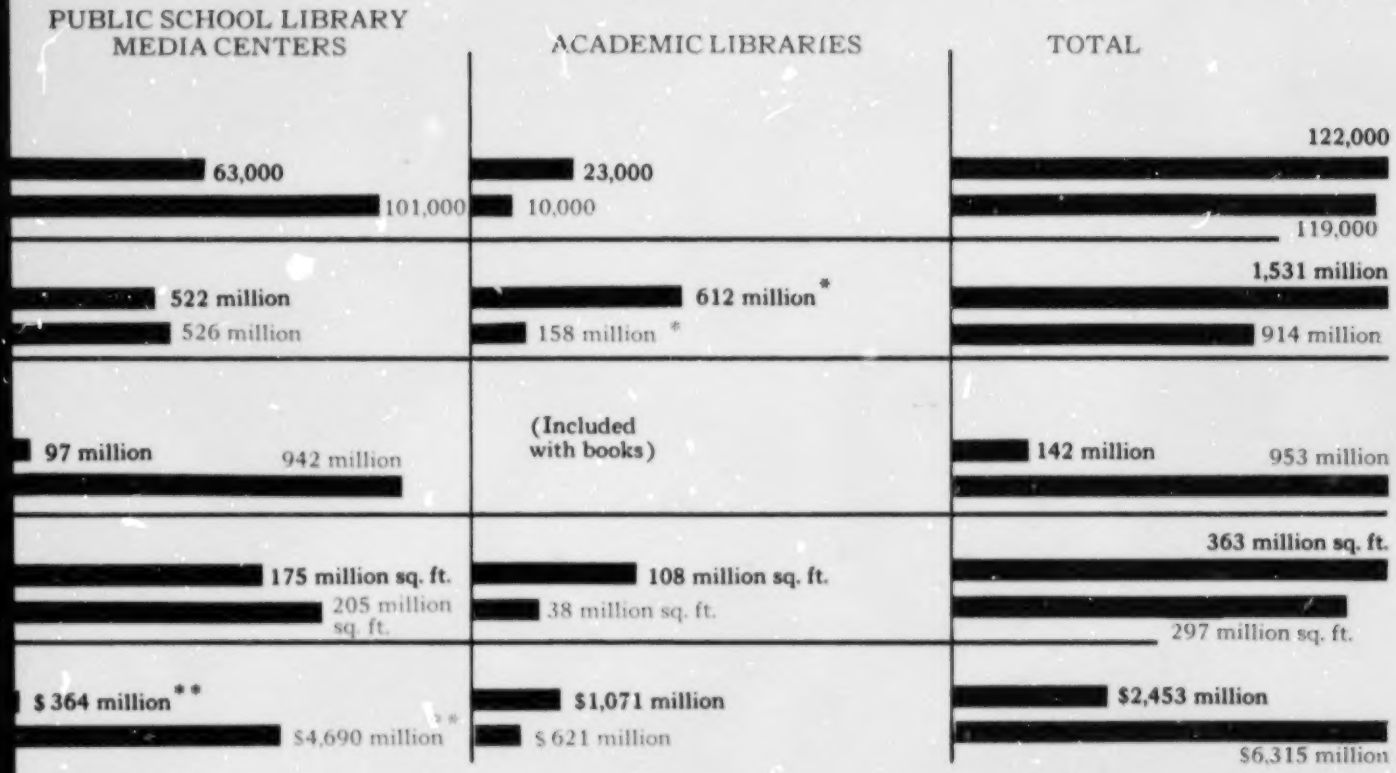
*But*

almost every academic library lacks vital resources.

# MAJOR LIBRARY RESOURCES AND NEEDS




Definition of Needs on pp. 3-4




* Includes records, films, and cassettes
** School library media center salaries excluded

# PUBLIC LIBRARIES

*Number of Libraries*
Our 8,307 public libraries serve communities with a total of almost 200 million persons. Between five and ten million persons have no nearby public library. Libraries vary in their resources, both by type of community (urban, suburban, and non-metropolitan) and by region of the country.

*Staff*
One-third of our libraries need more professional staff. Yet because of insufficient library budgets many professional librarians are unemployed. We need a total of 8,500 more positions (one full-time equivalent for each 6,000 persons in the community served). Readers generally borrow more books from libraries that have an adequate number of professional librarians.

*Materials*
Our public libraries have 397 million books, but they need 230 million more. (For minimum service we need two to three volumes per capita, with at least 10,000 volumes in the smallest library.) Records, films, and other nonprint materials are found mostly in city and suburban libraries. Almost 11 million more nonprint titles are needed nationally, most of them in our smaller communities. The deficiencies in library collections are getting worse each year.

*Space*
Libraries in communities of all sizes have severe space shortages. (The main library should have .6 square feet per capita; 84% of the population is served by libraries with less space.)

*Hours of Service*
One half of our country's population lives in communities where libraries are not open the number of hours needed for adequate service. (Minimum requirement: 66 hours a week for cities of 25,000; 45 hours a week for smaller communities.)

*Expenditures*
Only 9% of our nation's population has libraries that meet the minimum levels for operating expenditures. Libraries that exceed these minimum expenditures ($9-$12 per capita) tend to be the ones that receive larger amounts of state and federal aid (including revenue sharing). This shows that such aid does not replace local efforts and may increase it.

# PUBLIC SCHOOL LIBRARY MEDI CENTERS

*Number of Libraries*

Library materials today are central in education which now focuses on *learning* rather than *teaching*. Today 74,725 of our public schools with 44 million students have library media centers. This is an increase during the last decade of 50% in the number of students who have these resource centers in their schools. In spite of the rapid expansion in the number of libraries, however, one-sixth of our public schools (usually the smallest) still have no library media centers. And nationwide the libraries are not yet adequate in any resource.

*Staff*

Our nation's school library media centers need more staff. They have an average of one professional librarian for each 700 learners. They need one professional for each 250 students with at least one in even the smallest school. Shortages are overwhelming among support staff. Each professional needs a minimum of two support staff. Nationwide each professional has less than one.

*Instructional Materials*

Our school library media centers have only half the books needed to support the curriculum. (Minimum requirement: 20 per student.) The centers have only one-tenth the necessary audiovisual materials. These include records, films, and cassettes, as well as kits, specimens, and games. (Minimum requirement: 20 per student.)

*Space*

Active library use by students for self-directed learning and the growing importance of audiovisual materials have multiplied space requirements. Our library media centers have less than half the required space for minimum service. Schools can gain more space both through new construction and through renovation.

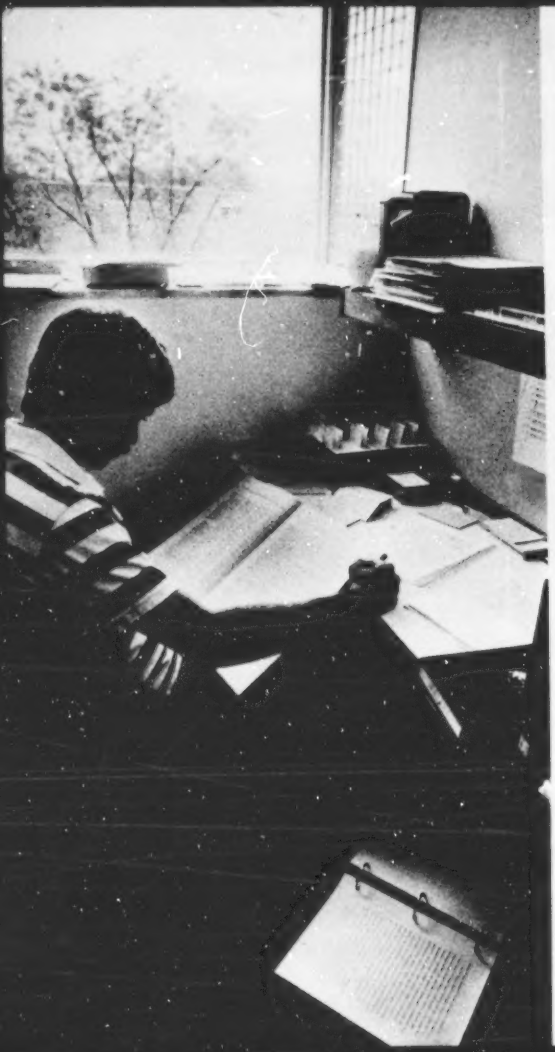
*Hours of Service*

The library media centers generally are open the 30 hours a week which is the minimum needed by students and teachers. Some are able to offer students additional hours after classes end in the afternoon, on Saturdays, and on weekends.

*Expenditures*

Most school library media centers operate with inadequate funds. A library must purchase up-to-date instructional materials, both books and expensive audiovisual media with equipment for its use. For these operating costs, excluding staff salaries, a library needs a minimum of $115 per student.

# ACADEMIC LIBRARIES



Photographs courtesy of Art Plotnik

*Number of Libraries*

Our nation's 3,000 academic libraries serve 10.2 million students (more than a million of them in graduate study) and 372,000 faculty who teach, do research, and engage in public service activities. In addition, government staff, researchers, and professional practitioners rely heavily on academic libraries for reference and research.

*Overall Resources*

Our nation's academic libraries as a whole are lacking in the staff, materials, and space required to offer minimum service. Some libraries exceed these basic requirements. Private universities generally have excellent collections (20% of the total materials held by all universities for 10% of the country's students). Almost every library, however, is deficient in some resources. Two-year college libraries are severely understaffed and on an average possess only 50% of the minimum number of books and nonprint materials needed.

*Staff*

Academic libraries need to employ 10,000 more professional librarians to supply minimum service. While some libraries exceed the minimum requirements many are severely understaffed.

*Books*

Our country's academic libraries need 158 million volumes and nonprint items to bring them up to minimum levels of service.

*Space*

Nearly four-fifths of all college and university students are in schools without sufficient library space. Academic libraries need 38 million square feet added to the 108 million square feet they now occupy.

*Hours*

The average hours of service for all our academic libraries is 74 a week. Of the libraries whose hours are too restricted, more than half are in two-year colleges.

*Expenditures*

Academic libraries need $621 million more each year for operating expenses to bring them all up to minimum standards of service. Continued failure to acquire materials (including current, relevant books and journals) and to function with adequate staff will cripple the ability of our academic libraries to fill their gaps and operate as vital links in our nation's educational and research network.

This inventory proves conclusively that our libraries are deficient in all types of resources in every region of our nation. The library community, however, needs to improve the methods of measuring library services both by collecting more precise data and by developing better ways to evaluate the benefits to library users.

The researcher who made the inventory identifies the statistics as the inventory's main product. He offers, in addition, proposals for discussion. Among them are:

- Libraries should expand their services, including the collection and supplying of information.
- Since information is the life blood of progress, many organizations and professions should be involved in its gathering and exchange.
- Public administrators and citizens must play a major role in developing a strategy for financing libraries so they can acquire the essential resources they lack.





☆ U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE : 1978 O—273-843

This pamphlet, written by Alice Norton, gives highlights from: *National Inventory of Library Needs, 1975: Resources Needed for Public and Academic Libraries and Public School Library/Media Centers.* A study prepared by Boyd Ladd for the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science, 1977. 227 pages, 158 charts and tables. For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402. Price: $3.60. Stock No. 052-003-00328-7.

Single copies of the pamphlet and a companion pamphlet *Public Libraries: Who Should Pay the Bills?* available without charge from the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science. Single and multiple copies are available from the U.S. Government Printing Office.

*The National Commission on Libraries and Information Science sponsored the preparation of this inventory. The content, however, does not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the agency.*

Frederick Burkhardt
*Chairman*
Joseph Becker
Daniel J. Boorstin
Robert W. Burns, Jr.
Carlos A. Cuadra
Joan H. Gross
Clara S. Jones
Marian P. Leith
Frances H. Naftalin
Horace E. Tate
John E. Velde, Jr.
Mildred E. Younger

*STAFF*
Alphonse F. Trezza
*Executive Director*
Douglas S. Price
*Deputy Director*
Mary Alice Hedge Reszetar
*Associate Director*
William D. Mathews
*Staff Associate for Information Technology*

The National Commission on Libraries and Information Science (NCLIS) is a permanent, independent agency within the executive branch of the federal government. Created in 1970, NCLIS has among its functions: to appraise the strengths and deficiencies of library/information service; to identify the country's library/information needs and develop plans to meet them; and to advise the President, Congress, and all levels of government, as well as private agencies, on library and information sciences. The Commission includes the Librarian of Congress and 14 members appointed by the President, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate. NCLIS operates through a Washington, D.C. office which has a staff of nine.

SUITE 601, 1717 K STREET, N.W., WASHINGTON, D.C. 20036

18